











The Smith Labor Bill: a Challenge to America

The Smith anti-strike bill, passed overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives, is now before the Senate. That body, less unfriendly to labor, ordinarily could be expected to tone the bill down or pass a different measure.

The full purpose and effect of this bill are evident only upon study. It provides that any labor union shall be deprived of its rights under the Wagner Act if it "knowingly or negligently" allows a Communist, bundist or person convicted of a felony to hold office.

The provision regarding a person convicted of a felony would have the same effect. Besides its ostensible legitimate purpose, it would enable enemies to destroy a union by planting or finding one ex-convict among its officers, in a judicial district where a judge knew the value of the word "negligently."

Twenty-Three Years After: The Polish Popular Government in Lublin

The first government of the Polish Republic was formed in Lublin on November 7th, 1918, two days before the German revolution and four days before the armistice. The defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary was already an accomplished and acknowledged fact, but the conservative elements of Poland were still reluctant to take the initiative in proclaiming Polish independence.

The Popular Government of Lublin lasted only one week. However, the chiefs ideas proposed in its platform were not lost, for they were adopted by the First Polish Popular Government in Warsaw. These early programs have profoundly influenced all subsequent progressive movements and ideologies of independent Poland.

The manifesto also announced the following immediate reforms: (1) equal rights for all citizens; (2) freedom of the press, of assembly, of worship, speech, processions, associations, unions, and strikes; (3) the expropriation by the State of large estates and fortunes; (4) the nationalization of forests; (5) the eight-hour work-day in industry, trade, and commerce.

THE MARCH OF LABOR

Illustration with text: THE LOSS DUE TO DEATH AND INJURIES RESULTING FROM INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS IN 1940 WAS ENOUGH TO BUILD 50,000 FIGHTER PLANES OR 160,000 LIGHT TANKS. A.F.L. UNIONS IN THE NEW YORK AREA ARE ASKING FOR A WAGE RAISE IN NEWSPAPER ADS ADDRESSED TO THEIR EMPLOYERS.

The Difference Between Organized Farmers and Organized Wage Workers

By WILLAM E. BOHN in The New Leader

Organized Farmers are more divided than organized wage workers. Instead of two outfits with different officers, slogans and histories, they have three. There are the Grangers, or Patrons of Husbandry, the Farm Bureau Federation, and the Farmers Union.

Anyone accustomed to the raiding and rabble-raising argument on the labor fronts would be astonished to see how amicably the three rival farmer outfits get on together. Being self-employed, the agriculturists do not need a closed shop, and there are no Labor Board elections.

These striking differences between the line-ups of workers on land and workers in mill, mine and factory were brought to mind by the recent diamond jubilee celebration of the Patrons of Husbandry. At Worcester, Mass., they came together from Nov. 12 to 21 to survey the results of seventy-five years of effort.

The Grangers, representing fewer than a million members, felt much more sure of their ground. They took for granted that they are at the very heart of the nation. They did not need to assert their patriotism. It was taken for granted. No one ever imagined them going on strike against the national defense effort.

The difference is well illustrated by the attitudes toward the two related federal departments. The AFL and the CIO are pretty well united in lack of respect for our national Department of Labor. Miss Perkins is politely listened to, but no one expects much of her.

STRANGE CONVENTION

Charles W. Erwin in the American Guardian

It was certainly a strange body of delegates (attending the International Labor Organization convention). They met in this country, because they could not meet in any other place in the world, except in Latin America.

I talked to some of the delegates. It was not a very pleasant experience for any one who in years past had talked to delegates elected to the ILO. Some of the former leaders of the workers were dead, having been murdered by either the Hitlerites directly, or by the few tools in their own country acting as the agents of these thugs.

Never before did such a body meet in this country. Delegates from Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, France, and other lands were truly men without a country. They never can return to the land of their birth, unless the Hitler thugs are driven from the soil of their native lands.

SELECTIVE SERVICE AND THE NAVY

Navy Secretary Knox told his press conference there has been a 15 percent drop in Navy enlistments since the torpedoings of Navy ships in the North Atlantic because parents are no longer as willing to give their consent to sons under 21.

PRICES

Labor Secretary Perkins reported the cost of goods purchased by wage earners and lower-salaried workers in large cities increased 1.2 percent from mid-September to mid-October. She said a survey of 18 staple foods in 19 cities showed food prices also rose moderately during the first half of November.

PRIORITIES

OPM ordered a 10 percent cut in production by large manufacturers of vacuum cleaners for household use; a two-thirds cut in production of lead and tin foil for decorative purposes and for tobacco, chewing gum, beverages, confections, films, and similar articles.

LABOR SUPPLY

The Social Security Board reported 475,000 workers were scheduled to be hired and 100,000 scheduled to be laid off in 9,900 industrial establishments between now and February. Nearly 250,000 workers will be taken on in the aircraft and shipping industries, the report estimated.

In the last 300 years no one has been able to improve on the violin and in the last six months the young man next door hasn't been able to improve on the slide trombone, even with six easy lessons.

WE ARE IN NOW

Last Sunday afternoon we were startled to hear that the militarist forces of imperialist Japan have attacked the American possessions in the Pacific Ocean. Several hours later, Japan declared war on the United States.

The working people of America did not want this war. They do not want any war. Americans generally, are peaceful people. But, when they are attacked, they are also the kind of people who are brave and who are unafraid to give up their lives for their cause.

We Socialists have never been for war. We are not exactly for this war, in the sense that we want to see it come about. However, since it is here and since the American way of life and structure of things has been attacked, we should do nothing to stop the administration vigorously repel the attacks.

The war is here, and we condemn the aggressors. We hope America will soon get the upper hand.

"LEWIS' LOST LAURELS"

(Editors note: There has been a good deal of confusion as to what really happened at the CIO's Detroit convention. The following is an inside view contained in an editorial entitled Lewis' Lost Laurels, in the Hosiery Worker, official organ of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers.)

Smear stories with scare headlines may be frightened some people into believing that the recent CIO convention at Detroit supported John L. Lewis in his recent fight with President Roosevelt. We propose here and now to set the record straight concerning the CIO, Mr. Lewis and the captive coal mine situation.

In its support of the union shop demands of the United Mine Workers, the CIO did nothing more than reiterated the traditional union position, a position which has been supported by all branches of the labor movement for more than a generation.

Every observer at the convention noted, and the daily press reported, that during demonstrations of enthusiastic support of the Roosevelt foreign policy, and of aid to Great Britain, Russia and China, only the Lewis group—a small minority—sat still. These Lewis forces, the United Mine Workers and the United Construction Workers, headed by his brother, A. D. (Denny) Lewis, were mute and still—an island of stubborn silence amid a storm of waving, shouting unionists in Detroit's Moose hall.

Because the daily press of America is largely unfriendly to organized labor and particularly to the CIO, it has sought to create the false impression that the CIO is not doing its utmost to serve in the national defense program and to support the administration's foreign policy.

It is a matter of record that the Lewis forces within the CIO were defeated on every issue, on and off the floor of the convention, including the most prized one of all—the plan to personally condemn Sidney Hillman for the Hillman-endorsed award of the Detroit housing project to the AFL after the contractor with CIO labor had made the low bid.

While the convention condemned the OPM action, it moved only against a bad policy and not against an individual—Sidney Hillman. Likewise, the convention's endorsement of labor's fundamental rights in the captive mine situation, backing up the Miner's union in its demand for the protection of a closed shop, was an endorsement of a sound policy and again not of an individual—John L. Lewis.

While discussing Lewis and the CIO it might be well to note that most of its leading representatives active in the CIO movement have consistently backed the president of the United States and not Mr. Lewis in matters concerning politics, national and international affairs.

Rail Employment Reaches 10-Year Peak

At the middle of October there were 1,218,000 workers employed on U. S. railways. This was the highest rail labor employment figure reached in 10 years, the Department of Commerce reported.

While employment went up to the highest point reached in a decade, rail traffic went up to an all-time high volume, the Department's statement showed.

A JOKE WITH A BARB

Some folks think they have a good joke on labor. In view of the fist-cuffs at recent conventions, they suggest that newspapers send their sports editors to cover labor conventions.

There is barb in that joke, and unfortunately labor invited it, for there have been fist-cuffs at conventions. Yet what can the general run of decent delegates to a convention do if a few men insist upon using gangster tactics?

They can and do fight back, certainly, and that stops the gangsters, but it does not eliminate the bad reputation caused by the mere fact that fist fighting took place.

The remedy lies farther back than the conventions. It lies in not permitting men of the gangster type to hold official positions in the union, or to be members of them at all for that matter.—Milwaukee Post.

WAR SPENDING

According to a Canadian government official the Dominion is spending 40 percent of its annual income on war, or nearly three times as great a percentage than the United States is devoting to its own defense program.

Not Afraid—But—

Ethelberta—Papa, when you see a cow ain't you afraid? Father—Of course not. Ethelberta—When you see a bit worm ain't you afraid? Father—No, of course not. Ethelberta—When you see a monstrous bunblebee ain't you afraid? Father—No, certainly not. Ethelberta—Ain't you afraid when it thunders and lightnings? Father—No. Ethelberta—Papa, ain't you afraid of nothing in the world 'ceptin' mamma? From lower to the higher next. Not to the top, is Nature's text; And embryo good, to reach full stature, Absorbs the evil in its nature. Lowell.